

*Binghamton, NY* - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today wrote to the US Department of Justice to request swift action to ensure that the fugitive Miladin Kovacevic is returned to the United States to face justice. In a letter addressed to Attorney General Michael Mukasey, Hinchey expressed his strong desire to have the Serbian government issue an extradition order for Kovacevic.

Kovacevic, a Serbian national previously in the United States on a student visa, fled the country on June 9 to avoid prosecution for first degree assault charges relating to his involvement in the beating of an American student this past May in Binghamton, New York. The brutal beating rendered a fellow Binghamton University student comatose.

“This fugitive faces charges that carry penalties equal to attempted murder and we must not allow him to sidestep the American judicial system,” Hinchey states in his letter to the Attorney General. “It is essential that we demonstrate that justice will be served to this individual.”

The text of Hinchey's letter follows:

June 30, 2008

The Honorable Michael B. Mukasey

Attorney General

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

I am writing to express my deepest concerns regarding the case of the fugitive Miladin Kovacevic. This Serbian national, previously in the United States on a student visa, fled the country on June 9 to avoid prosecution for first degree assault charges relating to his involvement in the beating of an American student this past May in Binghamton, New York.

I believe that it is critically important that your agency's Office of International Affairs quickly review our extradition treaty with Serbia. While the Serbian Constitution does not prohibit the extradition of Serbian nationals, a formal extradition request is needed to initiate this process. Mr. Kovacevic must be returned to New York to face justice for his alleged crimes and I believe that the Department of Justice should act quickly in petitioning the Serbian Ministry of Justice to sign an extradition order for Miladin Kovacevic. This fugitive faces charges that carry penalties equal to attempted murder and we must not allow him to sidestep the American judicial system.

I appreciate your attention to my request for urgency in resolving this regrettable situation. Many members of the Binghamton community and beyond are rightly wondering how this could happen in this age of elevated security. Therefore I believe that it is essential that we demonstrate that justice will be served to this individual.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

Maurice D. Hinchey